

CONFUCIANISM IN THE HAN DYNASTY

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.)—a Chinese philosopher and teacher whose ideas and teachings influenced Chinese (and other Asian countries') government, society, and culture

orthodoxy—a way of thinking, belief

hierarchy—a system in which people are arranged in order of rank, grade, or class

prestige—power to impress or influence because of success, wealth, etc.

During his lifetime, Confucius and his ideas were not readily accepted by those in power. In fact, Confucianism was just one of many different schools of thought at the time. Many years after his death, however, Confucianism reached a tremendous height. It was proclaimed as the state orthodoxy during the Han Dynasty.

A dynasty is a period of rule by members of a single clan.³ The Han rulers were in power for more than 400 years, between 202 B.C.E. and 220 C.E. It was during this time that political leaders began to accept Confucian ideas more and more. One of the many things Confucius taught was that the ruled should obey and respect their rulers. He believed in set hierarchies. Han rulers realized that if people believed in these types of Confucian ideas, their jobs as rulers would become much easier. As a result, Confucianism enjoyed great prestige during the Han Dynasty.

GROUP TASK

1. With your group, discuss the paragraph. List the three most important points of the paragraph.
 -
 -
 -
2. Illustrate each point on a separate sheet of paper. Your illustrations will be added to the class timeline. You can include words on your illustrations. Make sure you write in large letters so that everyone in the room can see.
3. Include these points on your individual timelines.
4. Prepare a short presentation about your illustrations. Your presentation should include
 - a description of each illustration
 - its importance
 - the date (if used)